

Pastor Note,

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Matthew 24:32-35



Growing up as a teenager, summer was my favorite season of the year, the warm weather, summer break, the family vacations, and the only time I would hear my favorite phrase, “who wants a fig cookie? This was a magical phrase that only my grandma would use! My siblings and cousins always knew that as soon as summer came around it was time to visit grandma’s fig orchards! I still have a fresh memory of how delicious it was to eat figs throughout the summer. My memories consisted of baking fig pies, fig empanadas, and fig bread with my mom and grandma and I still remember their unique sweet taste, soft and chewy texture!

During family gatherings, figs are still part of our conversation, we remember the prosperous times, and it was fun to have a fig tree and all types of fruit trees year round. In the Old Testament, it was a good thing for a person to live under his own fig tree, as the scriptures say: *“During Solomon’s lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their fig tree.” 1 Kings 4:25.* Jesus also talks about the fig trees, and all the gospels have a story of the fig trees.

Matthew tells us that after Jesus proclaimed the judgment on the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23, and after Jesus predicted that the temple will be destroyed, Jesus answers the questions about the end of times using the example of a fig tree.

So, the parable of the fig tree begins when Jesus was leaving the temple and the disciples asked him to look back at the beautiful and nice temple they had, they were proud of the majestic design, but after Jesus looked back, he pronounced the famous phrase: *“Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”* It was a tremendous shock for the disciples to hear those words. As Jews, they all were proud of the beautiful temple where the Glory of God theoretically dwelt.

Right after that, and while seating on the Mount of Olives, several of the disciples approached Jesus and asked him, Lord, tell us when these things will be? When the judgment will come? What will be the sign of the things that you just prophesied? At that moment, Jesus gave four of his disciples, Peter, John, Andrew, and Jacob an interesting explanation.

Practically, all of chapter 24 is used by Jesus to answer these disciples. To illustrate that, he uses the example of the fig tree. When summer approaches, he said that the leaves of the fig tree will start growing and sprouting. During the winter it seems that the fig tree is completely dead and dry, there are no leaves and no branches. However, when summer arrives suddenly, the fig trees are filled with green leaves. Soon the figs begin to sprout and the branches are tender.

Luke tells us in this lesson that Jesus told them: *“Look at the fig tree and all the trees. As soon as they come out on leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.” Luke 21:29-38.* Jesus, in a few words, not only takes the time to speak about the end of times, but to warned them, he told them to keep watch, pray, fast, take care of their life, and the life of your brothers. He said, don’t waste the time on things that are not worthy of the kingdom of God, stay awake, so that you may have the strength to escape from all these things that are going to take place. And the word says that many of them received the words and were saved.



It is very important that in these times in which we are living, we listen and learn to discern the seasons, the signs that are occurring in the world. As Jesus said, we need to watch, pray, fast, because times are bad and the kingdom of God is near.

We all know that the coming of the Son of Man is near, sometimes we don't want to talk about it, but it is important to share it. Jesus himself said: *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” Matt. 24:35* and this is the word that we have to remember. We know that Christ is coming soon, and we are not going to be here forever. We are all here for a purpose and we must fulfill it. God has allowed us to know him, to be move in the power of his Spirit, to be able to share his message, to bring people into repentance and to the way and salvation.

Continued...

Jesus said that when the branch of the fig tree becomes tender, the leaves sprout, it is the evidence, it is the sign that summer is near, and summer, the return of our Lord Jesus is near.

Therefore, we as people of God must take advantage of the times that we are living: times of peace, times of prosperity, times of fellowship. We must use these gifts to focus on God's kingdom. I prayed to God that He could help us "to fight the good fight" to stay into what is true, what is good, what is lasting. We know that everything that we see today will pass away, but his word will endure forever. The lesson of the fig tree reminds us that God's time is near, we must ask him to use us to help others to stay in His Word, to understand and discern the times in the way that we are discerning. Amen.



Have a fun summer!!!
Pastor Norma.



JULY

- Tommy Hinson - 2
- Karis Haigler - 7
- Rebecca McCall - 8
- Ashley Price - 10
- Bernice Tomberlin - 13
- Norma Villagrana - 13
- Jenna Purser - 19
- John Phifer - 23
- Hugo Villagrana - 26
- Lee Gaston - 27
- Peyton Wiley - 29
- Debbie Purser - 8

AUGUST

- Spencer Thomas - 1
- Tracy Biggers - 2
- Daniel Purser - 3
- Jennifer Clark - 8
- Kevin Brock - 9
- Robbie Hall - 12
- Julie Plyler - 20
- Madeline Taylor - 25
- Katie Price - 26
- Emily McCall - 30
- Annette Harris - 31



- Kay Medlin
- C.W. Price
- Jimmy and Susan Clontz
- Jim Beam
- Rondal & Eloise Purser
- Biggers family
- Tammy and Bobby Parker
- Shirley Lowery
- Bernice Tomberlin
- Christine & Brandon Braswell

JULY

- Dwight & Nancy Brooks - 6
- Robert & Emily McCall - 20

AUGUST

- Charles & Kay Medlin - 1
- Doug & Nancy Martin - 2
- Jamie & Amy Wiley - 4
- Carlton & Gayle Brock - 11
- Mark & Jennifer Clark - 16
- Bobby & Ann Simpson - 26
- Bobby & Lila Clontz - 30



Upcoming Church Events and News



Loaves and Fishes: This month we will be collecting jars of peanut butter and jelly

Senior Nutrition Program: There is a new volunteer opportunity, they provide meals to homebound seniors in Union County, if you would be interest in volunteering every week, or want to be a substitute for those who cannot make it, Please contact Gloria Haney at gloria.haney@unioncountync.gov or by calling 704-296-4312



We will host a Red Cross blood drive on 8/16/2021 from 3pm to 7:30pm in the New Life Center. Anyone wishing to schedule an appointment may go online to the Red Cross donation website and search for Zion United Methodist Church event or call <tel:1-800-733-2767> and request our drive We will also take walk ins, however, the wait is usually less if the person has an appointment.



The annual United Methodist Men golf tournament is scheduled for September 18th at Red Bridge in Locust, North Carolina. More information will be available in the coming weeks.



The Youth Group will be volunteering at The Closet on **July 22nd from 11-1**, a ministry partner of Heart for Monroe, The Closet needs lots of willing hearts and hands to make these shopping days successful. Please join us as we distribute clothes to those in need. For more information please go to <https://heartformonroe.com/volunteer/the-closet/>

Office News

Mackenzie will be on vacation August 6-13, the office will still be open to those who need it. Pastor Norma will be in Mexico visiting family August 24 - September 8

Upcoming Meetings

- ◆ *The care ministry team* will be meeting on July 15th at 6:30 over zoom. If you would like to participate please contact Pastor Norma.
- ◆ *The United Methodist Men* will be meeting on July 17th at 8am in the New Life Center
- ◆ *The United Methodist Women* will be meeting on July 27th at 6pm in the New Life Center
- ◆ The Senior Sunday school class is meeting again on Sunday Mornings at 9AM in the New Life Center

Prayer Group: Fast & Pray

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:19-23)

Tuesdays @ 6PM in the Sanctuary

Please send anyone prayer requests to zionumcmonroe@gmail.com



JUNE GIVINGS

Tithes	11,170
New Life Center	75
Children's Mission	6.50
UMCOR	50
Total	11,301.50

Music Notes from Barbara

Just a quick note from my house to yours!!! As you are all aware by now I will be retiring shortly when there has been someone hired to replace me! I am truly going to miss doing music at Zion. Zion has been my second home for the last 12 years and I have loved every minute I have been in the music ministry here! I will still be around so there will be no "good-byes" said!

To my choir members I just want to tell you how much I love each and every one of you and our friendship will always be strong! Hope that we will be able to sing once again from the choir loft before I do my "exit"!!

Sincerely yours - Barbara

Zion's Back to School Book Bag Mission Project

Zion has chosen to continue to host the annual back to school book bag mission project with some changes. This mission project provides school supplies, shoes, dental and hygiene items and Bibles to students in our community. We asked Unionville Elementary, Fairview Elementary and New Salem Elementary to provide us with names of 12 families each who may need assistance.

On Saturday, August 7, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. the families will be invited to pick up their school supplies, shoes, Bibles and other items.

We will collect donated supplies and monetary donations during June and July. You may drop off your donations in the collection bin outside the New Life Center.

If you would like to participate in this mission please contact Pastor Norma or Mackenzie.

Listed below are items that you may wish to purchase to donate to this mission:

- Book bags
- Student scissors
- Wide ruled notebook paper
- Bibles appropriate for elementary age students
- Packs of # 2 pencils (prefer Ticonderoga, no mechanical please)
- Pocket folders with prongs
- Glue sticks
- Ear buds (Dollar Tree)
- Cow Notebooks (these are the marbled notebooks that are sewn together, no cartoon characters please)
- Pencil box (hard plastic for easy cleaning)
- Colored Pencils
- 5 Tab dividers
- Crayons
- Large pink beveled erasers
- Expo markers
- Wide ruled spiral notebooks
- Index cards
- Pencil top erasers
- Post it Notes
- Graph paper
- ½ inch and 1 inch binders